

Type of Project:	Shelter Housing Durable Solution	Country:		Serbia
Approach:	Partial Self Help	Realisation Year:		1999-2004
Project name:	Partial Self Help Program for the Closure of Collective Centres	Version:	1	Date: March 2004



Initial Situation, Context

In 1999 Serbia still hosted the largest number of displaced persons in Europe: 276'281 refugees from BiH, Croatia, Slovenia and Macedonia beside 206'789 IDPs from Kosovo. Only a small number of refugees have returned home or have resettled in a third country. A great majority (over 65%) expressed their wish to be integrated in Serbia. While the majority of these people reside in private accommodation, 16'997 more vulnerable persons are accommodated in 192 Collective Centers (CCs) and 1'806 in specialized institutions. As CCs were opened as a temporary accommodation, they only meet very basic needs like shelter, food and sanitation. Despite of sometimes very unpleasant living conditions, a lot of residents have not managed to leave the CCs due to a lack of initiative, shortage of opportunities and dependency on external assistance. Different housing programs for alternative solutions have been developed and implemented to facilitate the local integration of refugees. The National Housing Strategy of the Serbian Government of 2002 confirms the closure of CCs as a priority. At the same time, the closure of CCs is as well a strategic choice of SDC/SHA for its activity in 2003/4 at the regional level. In this context the Serbian Government has shown an interest in the Partial Self Help Program of SDC and has included this idea in its National Strategy.

Goals, Beneficiaries

The goal of this program is to provide a durable housing solution by distributing essential building material to those CC residents who expressed their need for this type of assistance. The final goal is to contribute to the closure of CCs in Serbia and to support the social integration of refugees in their neighborhood in a host community. The social integration in this way is going faster than in a refugee settlement where beneficiaries often continue to live similar as they did in the CCs.

Approach

Based on the refugees requests for receiving support for the completion of their houses and based on the result of the interviews conducted by SRC in the CCs, SDC-Ho in Belgrade initiated this particular programme. The program was the delivery of basic construction material (cement and lime, brick products, reinforcement, insulation, timber, joinery, tools). Type and amount of construction material was given to the beneficiaries according to the technical assessment of SDC-HO. The local material remained the property of SDC-HO until it was used and built in according to the agreement. This rule was developed for stimulating the beneficiaries to fulfil their obligations.

Partner(s)

SCR: Serbian Commissioner for Refugees: informs the beneficiaries and is leading and coordinating the closure of CC's.

UNHCR: is responsible for protecting and supporting the refugees.

SDC-NLO: provides legal support, collect and check the applications of refugees, provides documentation, prepares rules and regulations for the project and decisions for the beneficiaries.

SDC-HO: the Housing Office in Belgrade is to develop concept, prepare the project, finance, implement, coordinate and monitor the project.

Implementations/Results

The implementation of the program started with the advertisement placed by the SCR in all CCs throughout Serbia. Then refugees were contacting the SCR municipal trustee who sent the applications to SDC-HO in Belgrade. A SDC-HO architect, conducting the technical assessment of the housing structure and elaborating a document with the individual construction material needed to finalize the building visited each refugee-family. SDC-NHLO checked the received documentation. A commission of all contracting parties according to previously defined criteria did final selection of the beneficiaries. Officially the project was finished once the building was installed/used. In total 1'060 families received building material from SDC-HO.

Cost, Financing

Cost per unit was approx. 2'500 EUR per family. In this cost the overheads of SDC for assistance and coordination is not included.

Problems/Constraints

The project depends very much on the refugee's motivation to leave CC and apply for the program. The majority of the refugees applying for the program were facing difficulties in obtaining building permits for their house. Building permits can't be obtained because in most municipalities a General Urban Plan does not exist.

Lessons learned What was useful in the approach?

The practical side of the project was, that refugees, once identified as beneficiaries, could immediately benefit from the program. The refugees arriving from CCs in the new or repaired house became a part of their neighborhood, which speeds up the process of social integration. As the refugees have selected their home and their location by themselves, obstacles because of dissatisfaction have been avoided quite well. Exact specification, detailed documentations and a strict monitoring successfully avoided the misuse of material.

Lessons learned What should be done different next time?

SCR should coordinate activities of various Humanitarian Organizations with similar programs in order to avoid duplications in humanitarian assistance.

A better possibility for SDC to coordinate directly its activities and future projects with different organizations.

Preconditions and Limitations for this approach

- Political acceptance of this type of program by national and local authorities
- Close cooperation with the other partners for identification of beneficiaries
- Political will to move out the selected refugees from the support of the CCs

Evaluations

None

For further information

Recommended Contacts:	Ernesto Morosin, SDC-Housing Office Belgrade
Recommended Institutions:	SDC/SHA, desk Europe + CIS
Recommended books/reports:	SDC/SHA Fact Sheet June 2000 "The Swiss Contribution"
Relevant other projects (links):	Similar Projects in BiH and Kosovo

Annex: (technical drawings, schemata) see page: 3-4

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Procedures Checklist

General Information

There are still many displaced people living in collective centres (CC). The aim of this project was to provide refugees with long-term accommodation for permanent integration in order to make them to leave the CCs. The beneficiaries will be able to start or to finalize the construction of their homes up to a level that provides elementary living conditions and are enabled to focus on improving their economic status by finding a job or starting some small scale business. In parallel the Government and the International Community will be able to reduce their financial contribution for the running of CCs and for supporting the CC residents.

Goals, Beneficiaries

The project assisted those refugees having a housing property but not being able to finalize the repair or construction with their own means. The support was done in supplying building materials to those, which are willing to stay permanently in Serbia (SCG). The quantity and kind of material are defined by having in mind the task to bring a building up only to the level that provides basic living conditions (tailor-made approach).

PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

1. Problem Detecting: SDC Initiative

- a Is there an awareness of the high number of refugee families opting for integration in Serbia?
- b Is there a commitment of the Government to provide durable housing solutions for refugees? (National Strategy?)
- c Is the closure of CCs a priority for the Government?
- d What is the specific situation for each identified family?

2. Concept: SDC Initiative

- a Analyse the integration needs of potential beneficiaries
- b Define the concept and the participation of each partner
- c Analyse the capacity of potential beneficiaries to contribute physically or financially to the durable solution
- e Assess the conditions for durable solutions in the particular Municipality

3. Assessment of CCs Situation: SDC Initiative + SCR + UNHCR + Municipality

- a Update the records about CCs situation in the relevant Municipality
- b Update the records about structure of beneficiaries in the CCs
- c Elaborate the appropriate durable solutions for other CC beneficiaries
- d Involve the municipalities where beneficiaries are opting for integration

4. Architectural concept: SDC Initiative

- a Analyse similar experiences and projects of other actors (NGOs)
- b Analyse the housing needs of integrated families
- c Elaborate plan of action and project proposal

PROJECT STRUCTURE

5. Partnership: SDC Initiative + SDC NHLO + UNHCR + Municipality

- a Discuss and agree on preliminary concept with all partners
- b Discuss and agree on criteria for the identification/selection of beneficiaries according SCR's interviews.
- c Prepare project proposal
- d Prepare first draft of Agreement based on preliminary discussion, define responsibilities
- e Define and sign the final rules and regulations for project and criteria's for the selection of beneficiaries

6. Responsibility (Agreement): All Partners

- a **SDC**: Initiates, funds construction, technical documents, coordinates, implements and monitors
- b **SDC NHLO**: Provides legal support, prepares rules and regulations for projects and beneficiaries, checks applications and provides the necessary documents (building permission etc.)
- c **SCR**: Identifies and informs the beneficiaries, ensures the closure of CC's
- d **UNHCR**: Ensures assistance to refugees
- f **Municipality**: Provides all requested permissions

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION**7. Selection of beneficiaries:** SDC + SDC NHLO + SCR + Municipality

- a Set up a joint commission
- b Define criteria, advertise the project in the CCs, elaborate forms for application
- c Assess vulnerability and possible technical solutions
- d Provide technical check-up of all existing project documents
- e Select beneficiaries by joint commission, inform them
- f Sign the contracts with the beneficiaries

8. Building works: SDC + Municipality

- a Technical assessment of the housing structures
- b Legal check-up of all requested documents
- c Organise the necessary "Building Permit" for each housing structure, if necessary
- d Organise Tendering (delivery of building materials)
- e Organise Contracting (delivery of building materials)
- f Organise delivery of building material, transports, storage etc.
- g Run the project monitoring
- h Organise the final account
- i Organise the documents for "Permit for use" and handover, if necessary

Legend

MUN: Municipality

BEN: Selected beneficiaries

SCR: Serbian Commissioner for Refugees

UNHCR: UN High Commissioner for Refugees

SDC NHLO: SDC Network of Humanitarian Legal Offices

For further information

Recommended Contacts:	E. Morosin, SDC Housing Office Belgrade e-mail: sdc.ho@eunet.yu
Recommended Institutions:	SDC/SHA, desk Europe + CIS
Recommended books/reports:	SDC/SHA Fact Sheet June 2002: "The Swiss Contribution"
Relevant other projects (links):	similar Projects in BiH and Kosovo